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NARRATIVE
OF
THE CAPTIVITY
OF
WILLIAM BIGGS

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INDIAN CAPTIVITY
OF WILLIAM BIGGS

Heartman's Historical Series Number 37

NARRATIVE

OF THE

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WILLIAM BIGGS

AMONG THE

KICKAPOO INDIANS

IN

Illinois in 1788

Written By Himself

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NARRATIVE
OF THE CAPTIVITY OF
WILLIAM BIGGS
AMONG THE KICKAPOO INDIANS
IN ILLINOIS IN 1788

In the year 1788, March 28th, I was going from Bellfontain to Cahokia, in company with a young man named John Vallis, from the State of Maryland; he was born and raised near Baltimore. About 7 o'clock in the morning I heard two guns fired; by the report I thought they were to the right; I thought they were white men hunting; both shot at the same time. I looked but could not see any body; in a moment after I looked to the left and saw sixteen Indians, all upon their feet with their guns presented, about forty yards distant from me, just ready to draw trigger. I was riding between Vallis and the Indians in a slow trot, at the moment I saw them. I whipped my horse and leaned my breast on the horse's withers, and told Vallis to whip his horse, that they were Indians. That moment they all fired their guns in one platoon; you could scarcely distinguish the report of their guns one from another. They shot four bullets into my horse, one high up in his withers, one in the bulge of the ribs near my thigh, and two in his rump, and shot

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four or five through my great coat. The moment they fired their guns they ran towards us and yelled so frightfully, that the wounds and the yelling of the Indians scared my horse so that he jumped so suddenly to one side of the road, that my gun fell off my shoulder, and twisted out of my hand; I then bore all my weight on one stirrup, in order to catch my gun, but could not. I had a large bag of beaver fur, which prevented me from recovering my saddle, and having no girth nor crupper to my saddle, it turned and fell off my horse, and I fell with it, but caught on my feet and held the mane; I made several attempts to mount my horse again; but the Indians running up so close, and making such a frightful yelling, that my horse jumped and pranced so that it was impossible for me to mount him again, but I held fast to my horse's mane for twenty or thirty yards; then my hold broke and I fell on my hands and knees, and stumbled along about four or five steps before I could recover myself. By the time I got fairly on my feet, the Indians were about eight or ten yards from me—I saw then there was no other way for me to make my escape but by fast running, and I was determined to try it, and had but little hopes at first of my being able to escape. I ran about one hundred yards before I looked back—I thought almost every step I could feel the scalping knife cutting my scalp off. I found I was gaining ground on them, I felt encouraged and ran about three hundred yards farther, and looking back saw that I had gained about one hundred yards, and considering myself quite out of danger. A thought then occurred to me, that I was as safe and out of danger as I would be if I were in the City of Philadelphia: the Indians had quit yelling and slacked their running—but I did not know it then. It being a tolerable cold morning and I was heavily clad, I thought perhaps the

Indians would give me a long chase, and probably that they would hold out better than I could; although at that time I did not feel the least tired or out of breath. I concluded to throw off my two coats and shoes, as I would then be better prepared for a long race. I had my great coat tied around me with a silk handkerchief pretty much worn—I recollect tying it with a slip knot, but being in a harry, it was drawn into a double hard knot; I tried some little time to get it loose—the longer I tried the harder the knot seemed to get, that stopped my running considerably; at length I broke it by some means, I do not know how. In the morning I forgot to put on my shot pouch before I put on my great coat, and then put it on over it. I pulled off the sleeves of my great coat, not thinking of my shot-pouch being over my coat, it having a very short strap, the coat got so tight in the strap that I could not get it loose for a considerable time. Still trying, it hung down and trailed on the ground, and every two or three steps it would wrap around my legs and throw me down, and I would catch on my hands and knees, it served me so several times, so that I could make no headway at running. After some considerable time, I broke the strap and my great coat dropped from me—I had no knife with me.

The Indians discovered that something was the matter and saw me tumbling down several times. I suppose they thought I was wounded and could run no farther; they then set up the yell again and mended their gait running. By the time I got my great coat loose from me, and was in the act of pulling off my under coat, I was pulling off one sleeve I looked back over my shoulder, but had not time to pull it off—the Indians being within ten yards of me. I then started again to run, but could not gain any ground on them, nor they on me; we ran about one hundred yards farther and

neither appeared to gain ground: there was a small pathway that was a little nearer than to keep the big road,—I kept the big road, the Indians took the path, and when we came where the path comes into the big road the Indians were within three or four yards from me—we ran forty or fifty steps farther and neither appeared to gain ground. I expected every moment they would strike me with their tomahawks—I thought it would not do to be killed running like a coward and saw no other way to make my escape than to face about and to catch the tomahawk from the first that attempted to strike me, and jerk it from him, which I made no doubt but I was able to do; then I would have a weapon to fight with as well as them, and by that means I would be able to make my escape; they had thrown down their guns before they gave me chase, but I had not fairly faced about before an Indian caught me by the shoulder and held his tomahawk behind him and made no attempt to strike me. I then thought it best for me not to make any resistance till I would see whether he would attempt to strike me or not. He held me by the shoulder till another came up and took hold of me, which was only four or five moments; then a third Indian came up, the first Indian that took hold of me took the handle of his tomahawk and rubbed it on my shoulder and down my arm, which was a token that he would not kill me and that I was his prisoner. Then they all took their hands off me and stood around me. The fourth Indian came up and attempted to strike me, but the first Indian that caught me pushed him away. He was still determined to kill me, and tried to get around to my back; but I still faced round as he was trying to get to my back—when he got up by my side, he drew his tomahawk the second time to strike me, but the same Indian pushed him off and scolded him very much—he let

his tomahawk hang by his side, but still intended to kill me if he could get an opportunity. The other Indians watched him very closely. There were but four Indians that gave me chase, they were all naked except their breachcloth, leggins and mocasins. They then began to talk to me in their own language, and said they were Kickapoos, that they were very good Indians, and I need not be afraid, they would not hurt me, and I was now a Kickapoo and must go with them, they would take me to the Matocush, meaning a French trading town on the Wabash river. When the Indians caught me I saw Mr. Vallis about one hundred yards before me on the road—he had made a halt. They shot him in the left thigh abo s e or eight inches above the knee, the ball came out just below his hip, his horse was not injured—he rode an elegant horse which carried him out of all farther danger—his wound mortified, he lived six weeks after he was wounded, then died. I understood their language, and could speak a little. They then told me to march; an Indian took hold of each of my arms, and led me back to where they shot at me, and then went about half a mile further off the road, where they had encamped the night before and left their blankets and other things. They then took off my under coat and tied my hands behind my back, and then tied a rope to that, tying about six or seven feet long, we then started in a great hurry, and an Indian held one end of the rope while we were marching There were but eight Indians marched in company with me that morning from the camp. The other eight took some other route, and never fell in with us again, until some time after we got to their towns. We had marched about three or four miles from that camp when Vallis arrived at the fort, about six miles from where also got up to show a willingness to be ready. The old chief told

they caught me, where they fired a swivel to alarm the people who were out of the fort—when the Indians heard the swivel they were very much alarmed, and all looked that way and hallowed yough, yough. They then commenced running, and run in a pretty smart trot of a run for five or six miles before they halted, and then walked very fast until about 2 o'clock in the afternoon, when they separated, I supposed to hunt, having nothing to eat. The old chief and one of the other Indians kept on a straight course with me, we traveled about three miles, when we got a little way into a small prairie and halted about fifteen minutes, there one of the party fell in with us, he had killed a bear and brought as much of the meat with him as he could carry. We then crossed the prairie and came to a large run about one mile and a half from where we had halted to rest. By this time three Indians had joined us. We halted there, made a fire and roasted the bear meat, the other two Indians staid behind as spies. Whilst the meat was cooking, the Indians held a council what they would do with the Indian that wanted to kill me. He was a young fellow about 19 years of age and of a different nation, being a Pottowatema. They did not want him to go to war with them; they said he was a great coward and would not go into danger till there was no risk to run, then he would run forward and get the best of the plunder, and that he would not be commanded; he would do as he pleased; was very selfish and stubborn; and was determined to kill me if he could get a chance. They determined in their council to kill him. It is a law with the Indians when they go to war, if an Indian will not obey the counsels and commands of his captain or chief, to kill them. When their meat was cooked, they ate very hearty, and when they were done eating, three of the Indians got up, put on

their budgets and started, this young Indian was one of them. I me to sit down, and the three Indians started off. In about three or four minutes after we started, but varied a little in our course. We had not traveled more than one hundred yards when we heard the report of a gun. The old chief then told me that they had killed the Indian that wanted to kill me. The other two Indians fell in company with us before night. We then traveled till about 10 o'clock in the night, when we encamped at a large grove of timber in a prairie, about four miles from the edge of the woods; made no fire that night. We traveled about forty miles that day. After they rested a while they sat down to eat their jirk. They gave me some but I could not eat any. After they were done eating, one of the Indians was sitting with his back against a tree, with his knife between his legs. I was sitting facing him with my feet nearly touching his. He began to inquire of me of what nation I belonged to. I was determined to pretend that I was ignorant and could not understand him. I did not wish then to know that I could speak some Indian language, and understand them better than I could speak. He first asked me in Indian if I was a Matocush, (that is a Frenchman in English) I told him no. He asked me if I was a Sagenash, (an Englishman.) I told him no. He again asked if I was a Shemolsea, (that is a long knife or a Virginian.) I told him no. He then asked me if I was a Bostonely, (that is American). I told him no. About one minute afterwards, he asked me the same questions over again. I then answered him yes; he then spoke English and caught up his knife in his hand, and said "you are one dam son of a bitch." I really thought he intended stabbing me with his knife. I knew it would not do to show cowardice, I being pretty well acquainted with their manner

and ways. I then jumped upon my feet and spoke in Indian and said manetway, kien, depaway, in English it is no, I am very good, and clapped my hand on my breast when I spoke and looked very bold; the other Indians all set up such ha! ha! and laugh that it made the other Indian look very foolish. He sat still and looked very sulky. After they had rested a while, they began to prepare to lay down. They spread down a deer-skin and blanket for me to lay on. They had tied a rope around my arms above my elbows, and tied that rope across my back, and a rope around my neck; they then tied the end of another rope behind to the neck rope, then down my back to the pinion rope; then they drew my hands forward across my stomach and crossed my wrists; then tied my wrists very tight; then tied my legs together, just below my knees; then tied my feet together with a rope round my ankles; then took a small cord and tied in between my wrists, and also between my ankles very tight, in order to prevent me from drawing out my hands or feet; they then took another cord and tied one end to the neck rope; then to the hand rope; then from the hand rope to the knee rope; they then took a rope about six feet long and tied one end to the wrist rope, and the other end to a stake about six feet from me stretched very tight, and an Indian laid on that rope all night; then they took another rope about the same length, and tied one end to the knee rope and the other end to a stake, and another Indian laid on that all night; then they tied a large half-dressed elk rope, one end to the back part of the neck rope which made a knot as big as my fist, the other end they tied to a stake about six feet from my head. When they finished their tying me, they covered me with a blanket. They tied me in the aforegoing way nine nights in succession; they had me stretched and tied so

tight, that I could not move one inch to turn or rest myself; that large knot was on the back of my neck, so that I was obliged to lay on it all night, and it hurt my neck very much. I never suffered as much in the same length of time in all my life; I could hardly walk when we got out to their town. They never made me carry anything except a blanket they gave me to keep myself warm, when they took all my clothes from me. The Indians carried a deer-skin and blanket all the way for me to lodge upon. When my hands and feet became sore with the tying the Indians would always pull off my moccasins at night and put them on in the morning, and patch them when they would require it.

The second day we started very early in the morning and traveled about thirty-five miles, which was the 29th of March.

The third day we traveled about thirty miles, which was the 30th of March. They killed a deer that day—in the evening they took the intestines out of the deer and freed them of their contents, when they put them in the kettles with some meat and made soup, I could not eat any of it.

The fourth day we traveled about twenty-five miles. We stopped about 3 o'clock in the afternoon at a pond. They staid there all night. They had some dried meat, tallow, and buffalo marrow, rendered up together, lashed and hung upon a tree about twenty feet from the ground, which they had left there in order to be sure to have something to eat on their return. They killed two ducks that evening. The ducks were very fat. They picked one of the ducks, and took out all its entrils very nice and clean, then stuck it on a stick, and stuck the other end of the stick in the ground before the fire, and roasted it very nice. By the time the duck was cooked, one of the Indians went and cut a large block out of a tree to lay

the duck upon; they made a little hole in the ground to catch the fat of the duck while roasting. When the duck was cooked, they laid it on this clean block of wood, then took a spoon and tin cup, and lifted the grease of the duck out of the hole and took it to the cooked duck on the table, and gave me some salt, then told me to go and eat. I sat by and eat the whole of the duck, and could have eat more if I would have had anything more to eat, though I had no bread. I thought I had never eat anything before that tasted so good. That was the first meal I had eaten for four days. The other duck they pulled a few of the largest feathers out off, then threw the duck, guts, feathers and all into their soup-kettle, and cooked it in that manner.

The fifth day we traveled about thirty miles. That night I felt very tired and sore, my hands, arms, legs and feet had swelled and inflamed very much, by this time; the tying that night hurt me very much, I thought I could not live until morning; it felt just like a rough saw cutting my bones. I told the Indians I could not bear it, it would kill me before morning, and asked them to unslack or unloose the wrist rope a little, that hurt me the most. They did so, and rather more than I expected, so much that I could draw my hands out of the tying, which I intended to do as soon as I thought the Indians were asleep. When I thought the Indians were all asleep I drew my right hand out of tying, with an intention to put it back again before I would go to sleep, for fear I should make some stir in my sleep and they might discover me. But, finding so much more ease, and resting so much better, I fell asleep before I knew it, without putting my hand back into the tying. The first thing I knew about 3 o'clock in the morning, an Indian was sitting astraddle me, drawing his tomahawk and rubbing it across my fore-

head, every time he would draw a stroke with the pipe of his tomahawk, he threatened to kill me, and saying I wanted to run away; I told him to kill away. I would as leave die as live. I then told him I was not able to run away. He then got off me, and the rest of the Indians were all up immediately. They then held a short council and agreed to tie me as tight as ever, and they did so. I got no more sleep that night. I never asked them to loose my ropes any more.

The sixth day we traveled about thirty miles, and had nothing to eat that day.

The seventh day we traveled about twenty-five miles; they killed a doe that day. She had two fawns in her, not yet haired. They stopped about four o'clock in the evening, and cooked the doe and her two fawns, and eat the whole up that night. They gave me part of a fawn to eat, but I could not at it, it lookd too tender. I eat part of the doe.

The eighth day we traveled about twenty-five miles, and had nothing to eat that day.

The ninth day we traveled about fifteen miles. We then arrived at an Indian hunting camp, where they made sugar that spring. About 11 o'clock in the forenoon, we had not yet anything to eat that day. The Indians that lived there had plenty of meat, hominy grease and sugar eat. They gave us plenty of everything they had to eat. We were very hungry and ate like hnugry dogs. When we were satisfied eating, the warriors went into a large cabin and I went with them, and immediately several of their friends came in see them, both men and squaws, to hear the news. It is a custom with that nation for the squaws to demand presents of the warriors if they have been successful. After some little inquiry the squaws

began to demand presents of the warriors; some would ask for a blanket, some for a shirt, some for a tomahawk; one squaw asked for a gun. The warriors never refused anything that was demanded. The manner in which they made their demand was, they would go up to an Indian and take hold of what they wanted. When the squaws were done with the warriors, there came a squaw and took hold of my blanket; I saw how the game was played, I just threw it off and gave it to her; then there came up a young squaw about eleven or twelve years old and took hold of my shirt, I did not want to let that go, as it was very cold day, and I let on I did not understand what she wanted. She appeared to be very much ashamed and went away. The older squaws encouraged and persuaded her to try it again; she came up the second time and took hold of my shirt again, I still pretended to be ignorant, but she held fast. I knew it would have to go. One of the warriors then stepped up and told me to let her have it. I then pulled it off and gave it to her. The old squaws laughed very much at the young squaw. I was then quite naked and it was a very cold day; I had nothing on me but moccasins, leggings and breachcloth. We remained there about 3 or 4 hours. The warriors then went out to the post to dance, they invited me to go with them to dance. I did so, they sung and danced around the war-post for half an hour. The old Indians would sing and dance sometimes out of the ring and appeared very lively. The warriors then marched right off from their dance on their journey. We had not got more than about 50 or 60 yards when I looked back and saw a squaw running with a blanket; she threw it on my shoulders, it fell down. I turned round and picked it up, it was a very old, dirty, lousy blanket, though it was better than nothing, as the day was very cold. We travelled

about five or six miles that evening, then encamped in the woods. I suffered very much that night from the cold.

The tenth day we traveled five or six miles in the morning. We got within a quarter of a mile of a new town, on the west bank of the Wabash river, where those warriors resided, about nine o'clock, and made a halt at a running branch of water, where the timber was very thick, so that they could conceal themselves from the view of the town. Then they washed themselves all over and dressed themselves with paint of different colors. They made me wash, then they painted me and said I was a Kickapoo. Then they cut a pole and pealed it, painted it different colors and stuck the big end in the ground, and cleared a ring around the pole for to dance in. The fifth night they cut a lock of hair out of the crown of my head about as thick as my finger, plaited it elegantly and put it in their conjuring bag, and hung that bag on the pole they contemplated dancing around, and said that was their prisoner, and I was a Kickapoo, and must dance with them. When they all got ready to dance, the captain gave three very loud halloes, then walked into the ring and the rest all followed him. They placed me the third next to the captain; they then began to sing and dance. When we had danced about half an hour, I saw several old men, boys and squaws come running to where we were dancing. When there were a considerable number of them collected, the captain stepped out of the ring and spoke to the squaws. He told them to carry his and the other warriors' budgets to the town; the captain then joined the other warriors and me in the dancing ring; he marched in the front and we danced and sung all the way from there into the town. Some of the old Indian warriors marched upon each side of us, and at times would sing and dance until we got into their town. We

continued dancing until we got through the town to the war-post, which stood on the west bank of the Wabash river; danced round that about twenty minutes; they then marched into the town, took all the cords off me, and showed me a cabin, told me to go in there, they were good Indians, they would give me something to eat; I need not fear, as they would not hurt me. I accordingly went in, where I received a plenty to eat and was treated very kindly.. The warriors went into other cabins and feasted very greedily. We had not eat anything that morning nor the night before. About one hour and a half before the sun set the same evening, the warriors went out to the war-post again to dance. They took me with them; several other Indians were present. They had danced about half an hour when I saw two Indian men and a squaw riding a horseback across the Wabash river, from the east side; they came to where we were dancing. One of the Indians had a handkerchief tied around his head and was carrying a gun; the other had a cocked hat on his head, and had a large sword. The warriors never let on that they saw them, but continued dancing about fifteen minutes. After the two Indians and squaw came up the warriors quit dancing and went to them and shook hands; they appeared very glad to see each other. The captain of the warriors then talked with them about half an hour, and appeared to be very serious in their conversation. The captain then told me I must go with them two Indians and squaw. The sun was just then setting; the two Indians looked very much pleased. I did not want to go with them, as I knew not where they were going, and would have rather remained with the warriors that took me, as I had got acquainted with them, but the captain told me I must go with the two Indians and squaw, and that they were very good Indians. The Indian that had the

sword rode up to a stump and told me to get up behind him on his horse; I did so with great reluctance, as I knew not where they were going; they looked very much like warriors. However, they started off very lively, and the Indian that I was riding behind began to plague and joke the squaw about me; she was his sister-in-law. He was an Indian that was full of life and very funny. When I got acquainted with him I was well pleased with him. We traveled about ten miles that evening before we reached the place they resided. They were then living at a sugar camp, where they had made sugar that spring, on the west bank of the Wabash, about ten miles below the old Kickapoos' trading town, opposite to the Weawes town. We arrived at their sugar camp about two hours in the night. They then gave me to an old Kickapoo chief, who was the father of the Indian that carried the gun, and the squaw, and the father-in-law of the funny Indian. The old chief soon began to inquire of me where I lived, and where the Indians caught me. I told him. He then asked me if they did not kill an Indian when they took me prisoner. I told him no, there was no body with me but one man and he had no gun. He then asked me again, if the Indians did not kill one of their own men when they took me. I told him I did not know; the captain told me they did, but I did not see them kill him. The old chief then told me that it was true, they did kill him, and said he was a bad Indian, he wanted to kill me. By this time the young squaw, the daughter of the old chief, whom I traveled in company with that evening, had prepared a good supper for me; it was hominy beat in a mortar, as white and as handsome as I ever saw, and well cooked; she fried some dried meat, pounded very fine in a mortar, in oil, then sprinkled sugar very plentifully over it. I ate very hearty; indeed, it was all very good

and well cooked. When I was done eating, the old chief told me to eat more. I told him I had eat enough He said no, if I did not eat more I could not live. Then the young squaw handed me a tincupful of water, sweetened with sugar. It relished very well. Then the old chief began to make further inquiries. He asked me if I had a wife and family. I told him I had a wife and three children. The old chief then appeared to be very sorry for my misfortune, and told me that I was among good Indians, I need not fear, they would not hurt me, and after awhile I should go home to my family; that I should go down the Wabash to Opost, from there down to the Ohio, then down the Ohio, and then up the Mississippi to Kaskaskia. We sat up until almost midnight; the old chief appeared very friendly indeed. The young squaw had prepared a very good bed for me, with bearskins and blankets. I laid down and slept very comfortably that night. It appeared as though I had got into another world, after being confined and tied down with so many ropes and the loss of sleep nine nights. I remained in bed pretty late next morning. I felt quite easy in mind, but my wrists and legs pained me very much and felt very sore. The young squaw had her breakfast prepared and I eat very hearty. When breakfast was over this funny Indian came over and took me to his cabin, about forty yards from the old chief's. There were none living at that place then but the old chief, his wife and daughter. They lived by themselves in one cabin and the old chief's son and son-in-law and their wives in another cabin, and a widow squaw, the old chief's daughter, lived by herself in a cabin adjoining her brother and brother-in-law. None of them had any children but the old chief. A few minutes after I went into this funny Indian's cabin he asked me if I wanted to shave. I told him yes, my beard was very long.

He then got a razor and gave it to me. It was a very good one. I told him it wanted strapping. He went and brought his shot-pouch strap. He held one end and I the other end. I gave the razor a few passes on the strap, and found the razor to be a very good one. By this time the old chief's young squaw had come over; she immediately prepared some hot water for me to shave, and brought it in a tincup and gave it to me, and a piece of very good shaving soap. By the time I was done shaving the young squaw had prepared some clean water in a pewter basin for me to wash, and a cloth to wipe my hands and face. She then told me to sit down on a bench; I did so. She got two very good combs, a coarse and a fine one. It was then the fashion to wear long hair; my hair was very long and very thick and very much matted and tangled; I traveled without my hat or anything else on my head; that was the tenth day it had not been combed. She combed out my hair very tenderly, and then took the fine one and combed and looked over my head nearly one hour. She then went to a trunk and got a ribbon and queued my hair very nicely. The old chief's son then gave me a very good regimental blue cloth coat, faced with yellow buff-colored cloth. The son-in-law gave me a very good beaver macaroni hat. These they had taken from some officers they had killed. Then the widow squaw took me into her cabin and gave me a new ruffled shirt and a very good blanket. They told me to put them on; I did so. When I had got my fine dress on, the funny Indian told me to walk across the floor. I knew they wanted to have a little fun. I put my arms akimbo with my hands on my hips, and walked with a very proud air three or four times backwards and forwards across the floor. The funny Indian said in Indian that I was a very handsome man and a big captain. I then

sat down, and they viewed me very much, and said I had a very handsome leg and thigh, and began to tell how fast I ran when the Indians caught me, and showed how I ran—like a bird flying. They appeared to be very well pleased with me, and I felt as comfortable as the nature of the case would admit of.

The next morning after breakfast, they all left that camp; they put all their property into a large perouge and moved by water up the Wabash river to the old Kickapoo trading town, about ten miles from their sugar camp; they sent me by land and one Indian with me. When we had got about half way to the town, we met with a young Frenchman; his name was Ebart; I was very well acquainted with him in the Illinois country; he spoke tolerably good English. The Indian then left me, and I went on to the town with the young Frenchman; I got to the town before the Indians arrived with their perouge, and the young Frenchman showed me their cabin, and told me to stay there until they would come, that they would be there in a few minutes. I there met with an English trader, a very friendly man, whose name was John McCauslin; he was from the north of England; we made some little acquaintance. He was a Freemason and appeared very sorry for my misfortune and told me he would do everything in his power to befriend me and told me I was with good Indians, they would not hurt me. He inquired of me where I lived and asked if I had a family. He then told me of the circumstance of the Indians killing one of their own men that day they caught me. He said it was a fact, he was a bad Indian and would not obey the commands of his captain and that he was still determined to kill me. My Indian family soon arrived and cleared up their cabin and got their family ready. They were a smart, neat and cleanly family, kept their cabin very nice and

clean, the same as white women, and cooked their victuals very nice. After dinner was over, there came four Indians in the old chief's cabin. Two of them were the old chief's brother's children. They appeared to be in a very fine humor. I did not know but that they belonged to the same family and town. They had not been there more than one hour, until the old chief and the four Indians sat down on the floor in the cabin and had a long discourse about an hour and a half. Then all got up. The old chief then told me I must go with those Indians. I told him I did not want to go. He then told me I must go; that they were his children and that they were very good Indians; they would not hurt me. Then the old chief gave me to the oldest brother, in place of his father who was killed about one year before by the white people; he was one of their chiefs. Then the four Indians started off and I with them; they went down to the lower end of the town and stopped at an Indian cabin and got some bread and meat to eat. They gave me some. I did not go into the Indian cabin. They had not been in the cabin more than ten or twelve minutes before the old chief's young squaw came up and stood at the door. She would not go in. I discovered the Indians laughing and plaguing her. She looked in a very ill humor; she did not want them to take me away. They immediately started from the cabin and took a tolerably large path that led into the woods in a pretty smart trot. The squaw started immediately after them. They would look back once in a while, and when they would see the squaw coming they would whoop, hollow and laugh. When they got out of sight of the squaw they stopped running and traveled in a moderate walk. When we got about three miles from the town, they stopped where a large tree had fallen by the side of the path and laid high off the ground. They got up high on the

log and looked back to see if the squaw was coming. When the squaw came up she stopped and they began to plague her and laugh at her. They spoke in English. They talked very vulgar to the squaw. She soon began to cry. When they got tired plaguing her, they jumped off the log and started on their road in a trot, and I ran with them. The squaw stood still till we got most out of sight. They would look back and laugh and sometimes hollow and whoop, and appeared to be very much diverted. They did not run very far before they slackened in their runnings. They then walked moderately until they got to their town, which was three miles further from the tree they stopped at. We got into their town about one hour and a half before the sun set. That same evening the squaw came in about half an hour after we arrived. I met with a young man that evening who had been taken prisoner about eighteen months before I was taken. His name was Nicholas Coonse (a Dutchman), then about 19 years of age. He heard I was coming, and he came to meet me a little way out of town. He was very glad to see me and I to see him, and we soon made up acquaintance. Coonse and myself were to live in one cabin together. The two brothers that I was given up to, one of them claimed Coonse and the other claimed me. They both lived in the same cabin. When the squaw arrived, she came immediately to our cabin and stood outside at the door; she would not come in. I noticed the Indians plaguing and laughing at her; she looked very serious. About sunset, Coonse asked me if I wanted a wife. (He could not speak very good English, but he could speak pretty good Indian.) I told him no. He then told me if I wanted one I could have one. I asked him how he knew that. He said, "There is a squaw that wants to marry you." pointing at her. I told him I reckoned not. He says, "Yes. indeed,

she tus; she came after you a purpose to marry you." I told Coonse I had a wife, and I did not want another one. He says, "O, well, if you want her you can haf her." She stood by the door for some time after dark. I did not know when she went away; she said two days and three nights before she returned home. I never spoke a word to her while she was there. She was a very handsome girl, about 18 years of age, a beautiful, full figure and handsomely featured, and very white for a squaw. She was almost as white as dark complexioned white women generally are. Her father and mother were very white skinned Indians.

The next day was the 9th day of April, and thirteenth day that I had been their prisoner. The chief Indians and warriors that day held a general council, to know in what manner and way to dispose of me. They collected in the cabin where I lived. While they were in council their dinner was cooking. There were about ten in number, and they all sat down on the floor in a circle, and then commenced by their interpreter, Nicholas Coonse.

The first question they asked me was, "Would I have my hair cut off like they cut theirs?" I answered "No." The second question they asked me was, "If I would have holes bored in my ears and nose and have rings and lead hung in them like they had?" I answered "No." The third question they asked me was, "If I could make hats?" (I had a large bag of beaver fur with me when they took me prisoner; from that circumstance I suppose they thought I was a hatter.) I answered "No." The fourth question they asked me was, "If I was a carpenter?" and said they wanted a door made for their cabin. I answered "No." The fifth question they asked me was, "If I was a blacksmith; could I mend their guns and makes axes and hoes for them?" I answered "No." The sixth question

they asked me was, "If I could hoe corn?" I answered "No". The seventh question they asked me was, "If I could hunt?" I aswered. "No. I could shoot at a mark very well, but I never hunted any." Then they told Coonse to ask me how I got my living; if I could do no work. I thought I had out-generalled them, but that question stumped me a little. The first thought that struck my mind, I thought I would tell them I was a weaver by trade, but a second thought occurred to my mind, I told Coonse to tell them I made my living by writing. The Indians answered and said it was very well. The eighth question they asked me was, "If I had a family?" I answered "Yes," I had a wife and three children." The ninth question they asked me was, "If I wanted to go home to see my wife and children?" I answered "Yes," They said, "Very well, you shall go home by and by." The tenth question they asked was, "If I wanted a wife then?" I answered "No," and told them it was not the fashion for the white people to have two wives at the same time. They said, very well, I could get one if I wanted one, and they said if I staid with them until their corn got in roasting ears, then I must take a wife. I answered them yes, if I staid that long with them. They then told me that I might go anywhere about in the town, but not go out of sight of the town, for if I did, there were bad Indians round about the town and they would catch me and kill me, and they said they could run like horses; and another thing they said, don't you recollect the Indians that took you prisoner and cut a lock of hair out of the crown of your head. I told them yes. Then they told me in consequence of that, if you attempted to run away, you could not live eight days. If you will stay with us and not run away, you shall not even bring water to drink. I told them I wanted to go home to my family, but I would not go

without letting them know before I went. They said, very well. They appeared well pleased with me and told me again I might go anywhere about in the town, but not go out of sight of the town. I was sitting on a bench, when the old chief got up and put both his hands on my head and said something, I did not know what. Then he gave me a name and called me "Mohcossea," after the old chief that was killed, who was the father of the Indian that I was given up to. Then I was considered one of that family, a Kickapoo in place of their father, the old chief. Then the principal chief took the peace pipe and smoked two or three draws. It had a long stem about three feet in length. He then passed it round to the other Indians before they raised from their council. He held the pipe by the end and each of them took two or three draws. Then he handed it to me and I smoked. The chief then said I was a Kickapoo and that they were good Indians and that I need not be afraid; they would not hurt me, but I must not run away.

By this time their dinner was prepared and they were ready to eat. They all sat down and told me to sit by. I did, and we all eat a hearty dinner and they all appeared to be well pleased with their new adopted Kickapoo brother.

These Indians lived about six miles west of the old Kickapoo trading town, on the west side of the Wabash river. They had no traders in their town. After dinner was over, they told the interpreter Coons that I must write to their trading town for some bread. I told Coons to tell them I had nothing to write with—no paper, nor pen and ink. They said I must write. I told Coons to tell them again I had no paper nor nothing to write with. Coons told them. Then the Indian that claimed me went to his trunk and brought me a letter that had one-half sheet of it clean paper. I told Coons

to tell them I wanted a pen. The same Indian went and pulled a quill out of a turkey wing and gave it to me. I told Coons I wanted a knife to make the pen. The same Indian got his scalping knife; he gave it two or three little whets and gave it to me. I then told Coons I wanted some ink. Coons says, "Ink—ink; what is tat? I ton't know what ink is." He had no name for ink in Indian or English. I told him to tell the Indian to get me some gunpowder and water and a spoon and I would make the ink myself. The Indian did so. I knew very well what their drift was; they wanted a proof to know whether I told them any lies when they examined me in their council. When I had made the ink and was ready to write I asked Coons how many loaves of bread I should write for. He says, "Ho! a couple of lofes; tay only want to know if you can write or if you told them any lies or not." I wrote to the English trader, that I mentioned before that I had made some acquaintance with the day I passed the old trading town, for to get me two loaves of bread. He very well knew my situation and circumstances. There was a Frenchman, a baker, that lived in the trading town.

When I had finished writing, the Indian took it up and looked at it and said, "Depaway, vely good." Coons' master, a brother to the one that claimed me, told Coons to go catch his horse and take the letter for the bread, not stay, but return as soon as possible. Coons hurried off immediately and soon returned. As soon as he came back he brought the two loaves of bread and gave them to me. I then asked Coons what I should do with this bread, as he was somewhat better acquainted with the ways of the Indians than I was. He says, "Kife one loaf to tay old squaw and her two little chiltren, and tofide the otter loaf petween you and your master, put keep a pigest half." I did so. This old squaw was the mother of the two Indians

that claimed Coons and myself. The old squaw and her two children soon eat their loaf. I then divided my half between the two little children again. That pleased the old squaw very much; she tried to make me sensible of her thanks for my kindness to her two little children.

While Coons was gone for the bread, the Indian that claimed me asked me to write his name. I asked him to speak his name distinctly. He did. I had heard it spoken several times before. His name was "Mahtomack." When I was done writing he took it up and looked at it and said it was "Depaway." He then went to his trunk and brought his powder horn, which had his name wrote on it by an officer at Post Vincennes in large print letters, and compared them together. They both were the same kind of letters and his name spelt exactly the same. He seemed mightily pleased and said it was "bon vely good." It was a big captain he said wrote his name on the powder-horn at Opost. The wife of the Indian that claimed me, next morning combed and queued my hair and gave me a very large ostrich feather and tied it to my hat. The Sunday following after I was taken to that town, there was a number of Indians went from that town to the old Kickapoo trading town. They took me with them to dance what is called the "Beggar's Dance." It is a practice for the Indians every spring, when they come in from their hunting ground, to go to the trading towns and dance for presents; they will go through the streets and dance before all the traders' doors. The traders then will give them presents, such as tobacco, bread, knives, spirits, blankets, tomahawks, &c.

While we were in town that day I talked with my friend McCauslin to speak to the Indians and try to get them to sell me, but they would not agree to sell me then. They said they would come down

the Sunday following and bring me with them, perhaps they would then agree to sell me. They complied with their promise and brought me down with them. My friend McCauslin then inquired of them if they had agreed to sell me; they told him they would. McCauslin then sent for the interpreter, and the Indians asked one hundred buckskins for me in merchandize. The interpreter asked me if I would give it? I told him I would. The Indians then went to the traders' houses to receive their pay. They took but seventy bucks' worth of merchandize at that time. One of the articles they took was bread, three loaves, one for the Indian that claimed me, one for his wife, the other one for me. I saw directly they wanted me to go back home with them. After a little while they started and motioned and told me I must go with them. I refused to go. The Indian fellow took hold of my arm and tried to pull me forward. I still refused going with them. He still continued pulling and his wife pushing me at the back. We went scuffling along a few yards till we got before my friend McCauslin's cabin door. He discovered the bustle and asked me what the Indians wanted. I told him they wanted me to go home with them. He asked me if I wanted to go. I told him no. He then told me to walk into his cabin and sit down and he would go and bring the interpreter. I went in and the two Indians followed me into the cabin and sat down. The interpreter came in immediately and asked the Indians what they wanted. They told him they wanted me to go home with them. The interpreter then asked if I wanted to go with them. I told him no. He then told the Indians they had sold me and that they had nothing more to do with me, that I was a freeman, that I might stay where I pleased. They then said they had not received all their pay. The interpreter then asked them why they did not take it all? They

said they expected I would go home with them and remain with them until I got an opportunity to go home. The interpreter then told them they could get the balance of their pay. They said if I did not go home with them they must have thirty bucks more. The interpreter asked me if I was willing to give it. I told him yes. I did not want to go back again. The Indians then went and took their thirty dollars of balance and thirty more and went off home. I then owed the traders that advanced the goods for me one hundred and thirty buckskins for my ransom, which they considered equal to $260 in silver. There were five traders that were concerned in the payment of the goods to the Indians. One of them was a Mr. Bazedone a Spaniard, who sometimes traded in the Illinois country, with whom I had some acquaintance. I told him if he would satisfy the other four traders, I would give him my note, payable in the Illinois country. He did so, and I gave him my note for the $260, to be paid twelve months after date in the Illinois country, and $37 more for my boarding and necessaries I could not do without, such a bear skin and blanket to sleep on, a shirt, hat, tobacco and handkerchief.

My frend McCauslin took me to a Frenchman's house—he was a baker by trade, the only baker in town—to board with him until I got an opportunity to go home. Two days after I went to stay at the baker's, the Indian that claimed me, his squaw and the young squaw that followed us to the new town, came to see me and stayed three or four hours with me. He asked me to give him some tobacco. I told him I had no money. He thought I could get anything I wanted. I bought him a carrot of tobacco; it weighed about three pounds; he seemed very well pleased. He and his wife wanted me very much to go back home with them again. I told them I

could not, that I was very anxious to go home to my wife and family. Three or four days after that they revisited me, and still insisted on me to go home with them. I told them that I expected every day to get an opportunity to go home. I had some doubts about going back with them; I thought perhaps they might play some trick on me, and take me to some other town; and their water was so bad I could not drink it—nothing but a small pond to make use of for their drinking and cooking, about forty or fifty yards long and about thirty yards wide. Their horses would not only drink from, but wallow in it; the little Indian boys every day would swim in it, and the Indians soak their deerskins in it. I could not bear to drink it. When they would bring in a kettle of water to drink, they would set it down on the floor. The dogs would generally took the first drink out of the kettle. I have often seen when the dogs would be drinking out of a kettle, an Indian would go up and kick him off, and take up the kettle and drink after the dog. They had nothing to eat the last week I was with them but Indian potatoes —some people call them hoppines—that grew in the woods, and they were very scarce. Sometimes the Indian boys would catch land terrapins. They would draw their heads out and tie a string around their neck and hang them up a few minutes, and then put them in a kettle of water with some corn—when they had it—without taking the entrails out or shell off the terrapin, and eat the soup as well as the meat. We had all liked to have starved that week; we had no meat; I was glad to get away.

I staid three weeks with the French baker before I got an opportunity to start home. I had a plenty to eat while I remained with

the baker—good light bread, bacon and sandy hill cranes, boiled in leyed corn, which made a very good soup. I paid him three dollars per week for my board.

There was a Mr. Pyatt a Frenchman, and his wife, whose residence was at St. Vincennes, with whom I had some acquaintance. They had moved up to that Kickapoo town in the fall of the year in order to trade with the Indians that winter. They were then ready to return home to Vincennes. Mr. Pyatt had purchased a drove of horses from the Indians. He had to go by land with his horses. Mrs. Pyatt hired a large perogue and four Frenchmen to take her property home to Vincennes. I got a passage in her perogue. She was very friendly to me; she did not charge me anything for my passage.

We arrived in Vincennes in forty-eight hours after we left the Kickapoo trading town, which is said to be two hundred and ten miles. The river was very high, and the four hands rowed day and night. We never put to land but twice to get a little wood to cook something to eat.

I staid five days at Vincennes before I got an opportunity of company to go on my way home. It was too dangerous for one man to travel alone by land without a gun. There was a Mr. Duff, who lived in the Illinois country, came to Vincennes to move a Mrs. Moredock and family to the Illinois. I got a passage with him by water. The morning I started from Vincennes he was just ready to start before I knew I could get a passage with him, and I had not time to write. I got a Mr. John Rice Jones, a friend of mine, to write to Col. Edgar, living in Kaskaskia, in the Illinois, who was a particular friend of mine, and sent it by the express, a Frenchman, that was going to start that day from Vincennes to Kaskaskia, which he could ride in four days, and request Col. Edgar to write to my wife,

who lived at Bellfontain, about forty miles from Kaskashia, and inform her that I was at Post Vincennes, on my return home with a Mr. Duff by water, and inform her that I would be at Kaskaskia on a certain day; I think it was two weeks from the time I left Vincennes, and for her to send me a horse on that day to Kaskashia. Col. Edgar wrote to her immediately, as soon as he received Mr. Jones' letter. That was the first time she heard from me after I was taken prisoner. I had written to her while I was at the Kickapoo town. That letter never reached her. I had two brothers living at the Bellfontain; they met me on the day I proposed being at Kaskaskia and brought me a horse. The next day I got home to the Bellfontain.